



Early Learning Joint Resolution Partnership 2011 Priority Strategies Early Learning Plan

Following more than a year of working with hundreds of Washington residents, the Washington State Early Learning Plan was finalized on Sept. 1, 2010. We are proud of this effort, and excited that the plan is a solid roadmap for ensuring children in Washington are prepared to succeed in school and life.

Over the past few months, the Department of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Thrive by Five Washington—the members of the Early Learning Joint Resolution Partnership—have decided how we will help implement the Early Learning Plan. We have agreed to focus on 11 key strategies within the plan during calendar year 2011.

That is not to say that work on other strategies is not happening, both within our three agencies and with other groups around the state. The 11 strategies we outline in this *2011 Implementation Priorities* document are ones that our three agencies agreed to focus on in 2011. These 11 strategies are essential to building an early learning system, and, for the most part, already have funding secured. In short, they are what we think we can tackle even in these tough economic times.

Our 11 partnership priority strategies for 2011 are:

- Home visiting (Early Learning Plan Strategy #5)
- Early literacy (Early Learning Plan Strategy #10)
- ECEAP (Early Learning Plan Strategy #12)
- Deepen parent, caregiver and early learning professional knowledge (Early Learning Plan Strategies #14, 15, 16)
- Quality Rating and Improvement System (Early Learning Plan Strategy #24)
- Align Prekindergarten and K-3 Instructional & Programmatic Practices (Early Learning Plan Strategy #27)
- Kindergarten readiness assessment (Early Learning Plan Strategy # 28)
- Phased-in full-day kindergarten (Early Learning Plan Strategy #29)
- Early Learning and Development Benchmarks (Early Learning Plan Strategy #31)
- Statewide infrastructure (Early Learning Plan Strategy #34)
- P-20 Longitudinal Data System (Early Learning Plan Strategy #36)

Read more in the following pages about why these strategies were chosen for priority in 2011, and how they will be funded. To keep this document brief, it does not include information about outcomes and measurements. You can find that at www.del.wa.gov/plan.

It will take the entire early learning community working together to build a system that ensures children have every opportunity to be successful in school and life. Many of you at the local, regional and state level will play crucial roles in implementing specific strategies within the Plan. Moving forward, we are committed to our strong partnerships with communities to make progress on the strategies within the plan.

Thank you for your efforts and energy in making the youngest learners a top priority for our state!



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2011 Partnership priority strategies



For more information about these strategies and the
Early Learning Plan, visit www.del.wa.gov/plan

2011 Partnership priority strategies

Ready and Successful Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Home Visiting Available to At-Risk Families • Expand and Enhance ECEAP • Increase Use of Early Literacy Services and Programs
Ready and Successful Parents, Families and Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide More Parenting Learning Opportunities
Ready and Successful Early Learning Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
Ready and Successful Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (WaKIDS) • Implement Phased-In Full-Day Kindergarten • Align Prekindergarten and K-3 Instructional & Programmatic Practices
Ready and Successful Systems and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Statewide Infrastructure for Partnerships and Mobilization • Expand P-20 Longitudinal Data System • Revise and Promote Use of <i>Early Learning and Development Benchmarks</i>

Make Home Visiting Available to At-Risk Families

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #5)

Partnership lead: Thrive by Five Washington (Home Visiting Services Account) and Department of Early Learning (Home Visiting Plan Development)

Strategy: Make evidence-based and promising prenatal and child (birth to 5 years) home visitation services more widely available to at-risk families and caregivers.

Why it matters: Evidence-based home visiting is a voluntary early childhood strategy that can enhance parenting, and promote the optimal growth and development of young children by buffering the effects of risk factors and stress in the family.



Our actions for 2011:

Home Visiting Services Account

- Award and implement competitive grants through the Home Visiting Services Account (HVSA) created in 2010 in local communities.
- Coordinate and evaluate HVSA grants and provide technical assistance to grantees.

Home Visiting Plan Development

- Convene cross-agency governance structure and partnership group to plan and develop Washington State Home Visiting Plan. Establish outreach plan to ensure inclusive process.
- Submit Home Visiting Plan to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Approval would allow Washington to access a five-year federal grant to create a comprehensive evidence-based home visiting system.

Funding:

Home Visiting Services Account

\$168,565 in state funding, matched by private funds through Thrive by Five Washington.

Home Visiting Plan Development

\$500,000 in federal funds through HHS already has come to Washington for the home visiting needs assessment and for the Home Visiting Plan development required under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Washington will receive the remaining \$800,000 when our plan is accepted by HHS.

Increase Use of Early Literacy Services and Programs

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #10)

Partnership lead: Thrive and OSPI

Strategy: Increase use of research-based early literacy programs and practices by parents, families, caregivers and early learning professionals.

Why it matters: Research shows early language development and literacy skills support future success in school. Children who are not reading at grade level by third grade are at greater risk of dropping out and school failure.

Our actions for 2011:

- Develop a birth through 12th grade literacy plan through State Literacy Team
- Continue Culture of Literacy grants through Thrive by Five Washington in local communities
- Secure funding and continue preschool-3rd grade partnership grants
- Create and maintain collaboration among statewide literacy partners
- Expand Reach Out and Read program to more communities around the state
- Include literacy track at Starting Strong Conference
- Identify other early literacy programs for possible expansion

Possible funding:

- Reach Out and Read funding in state budget
- State Advisory Council grant
- U.S. Department of Education Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative Funding
- Private funding

Expand and Enhance ECEAP

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #12)

Partnership lead: DEL

Strategy: Reduce the preparation gap by expanding high-quality, culturally competent comprehensive ECEAP education, health coordination and family support services to cover all low-income and at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds not served by Head Start.

Why it matters: Many children arrive at school without the social, academic and physical skills important for school success, with higher percentages of low-income and at-risk children starting behind their peers. Emerging research indicates that full-day developmentally appropriate preschool programs can result in greater gains for children who are significantly behind at preschool age.

Our actions for 2011:

- Continue preschool work group created in Senate Bill 6759 to develop a plan that examines opportunities and barriers to at least two options for a comprehensive voluntary program of early learning: as part of the state definition of basic education, or as an entitlement program executed by statute or constitutional amendment.
- Submit plan to Quality Education Council and Early Learning Advisory Council on Nov. 1.

Funding: State funding

Deepen Parenting, Caregiver and Early Learning Professional Knowledge and Learning Opportunities

(Early Learning Plan Strategies #14, 15, 16)

Partnership lead: Thrive

Strategy: Provide culturally relevant messages, learning opportunities and peer supports that provide child development and parenting guidance in diverse and parent-friendly venues, especially as it relates to social emotional development and a strong caregiver/child bond.

Why it matters: Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Many parents feel they don't have the information, skills and support to feel confident in this role so they can give their children the best start in life. Parents and caregivers need access to information and learning opportunities—including in their own language—to pursue learning about child development and optimal parenting.

Our actions for 2011:

- Develop and launch statewide “Love. Talk. Play” parent awareness and outreach campaign targeted at parents of children birth to 3, with an emphasis on harder to reach parents.
- Continue work with parent educators around the state under the national Communities of Practice model.

Funding: Private funding, and leveraging partnerships to launch “Love. Talk. Play.”



Implement Quality Rating and Improvement System (Seeds to Success)

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #24)

Partnership lead: Thrive and DEL

Strategy: Continue implementing Seeds to Success, Washington's voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for licensed child care, so that early learning and school-age providers have the support and resources necessary to improve the quality of their programs and environments and parents have the information they need to choose child care.

Why it matters: High-quality early learning experiences for children support later success in school. But not all families have access to high-quality child care. A fully implemented QRIS will help support improved quality in licensed care, and give families better information. DEL supports a statewide approach to implementation to expedite alignment of current resources with Seeds to Success and use the talent and energy of providers who want to be involved from the start.

Our actions for 2011:

- Thrive by Five Washington will lead the completion and analysis of the Seeds to Success field test in June. This field test will include a robust evaluation of 93 facilities, including ratings on the Seeds standards, and results from the Environmental Rating Scale and Classroom Assessment Scoring System.
- Based on the outcome of the field test, DEL will work with key partners to develop a statewide implementation plan within existing resources. DEL expects to launch this statewide effort in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2011.
- Integrate and align Seeds with licensing, professional development expenditures and DEL data system framework.
- Develop and implement strategy to collect child outcomes in participating Seeds facilities.
- Thrive will create and implement 2011-2013 Seeds communication and parent engagement plan.

Funding:

- Current field test: private funding and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars.
- DEL will use a portion of the federal Child Care and Development Fund quality set-aside funds to expand Seeds to a limited number of facilities statewide in 2011-2013 biennium.



Align Prekindergarten and K-3 Instructional & Programmatic Practices

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #27)

Partnership lead: OSPI

Strategy: Align children's prekindergarten through third-grade experiences with research-based developmentally and culturally competent instructional and programmatic practices.

Why it matters: Aligning instructional and programmatic practices across the prekindergarten through third grade continuum helps ensure gains achieved in prek are sustained through the early elementary years.

Our actions for 2011:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of prek-3 alignment among district superintendents, principals, teachers and among early learning professionals.
- Establish group with representation from Thrive, DEL, OSPI, educational service districts (ESD) and child care resource & referral agencies to ensure integration of prek-3 efforts.
- Share existing prek-3 alignment information and resources with educators and other professionals through workshops, conferences, meetings and other conversations.
- P-3 partnership implementation grants

Possible funding:

- Existing funding for staff development and teacher meetings.
- OSPI will seek new sources of funding to develop and enhance prek-3 models.
- Federal State Advisory Council grant funding (DEL)

Implement Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #28)

Partnership lead: DEL and OSPI

Strategy: Create and implement a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Process that includes information from parents, caregivers and early learning professionals, the history of early learning, and addresses multiple domains of early learning and development.

Why it matters: Washington has no statewide, consistent assessment process for children entering kindergarten, although many school districts and schools use various tools and processes. A statewide, culturally competent, and developmentally appropriate kindergarten readiness process that includes parents, kindergarten teachers and early learning professionals could offer a way to better understand children's strengths and needs as they enter kindergarten. It also offers another way to measure the impact of early learning investments.

Our actions for 2011:

- Complete school year 2010-2011 Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) pilot in 115 classrooms around the state.
- Submit mid-year report (jointly with OSPI) to Legislature on Jan. 15, 2011, outlining the pilot process, implementation, data collected to date, and recommended next steps.
- Submit final report (June 2011) with information on assessment tools piloted, lessons learned, data collected.
- Explore funding options to continue WaKIDS in 2011-2012 school year and beyond.

Funding:

- For school year 2010-2011, state funding plus private funding from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Thrive by Five Washington.
- For future school years: Include WaKIDS as a component of state-funded full-day kindergarten program.

Continue Implementation of Phased-In Full-Day Kindergarten (Early Learning Plan Strategy #29)

Partnership lead: OSPI

Strategy: Continue the phase-in of state-funded full-day kindergarten as part of basic education (RCW 28A.150.315).

Why it matters: Full-day kindergarten is shown to give young children—especially those living in poverty—the time to learn the foundational skills and knowledge that are important to future school success.



Our actions for 2011:

- Increase number of state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms by 11 percent according to statute, or at least maintain current funding levels
- Collect data on full-day kindergarten that measures effectiveness of program
- Strengthen support and information OSPI's early learning department offers to teachers, administrators and staff of full-day kindergarten programs about quality
- Survey state-funded full-day kindergarten districts about their needs, questions

Funding: State dollars

Revise and Promote Use of *Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #31)

Partnership lead: DEL

What it is: The *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks* were first created in 2005 as a resource outlining what children may be able to know and do at different stages of development. Within the Benchmarks is a recommendation that the document be reviewed and updated every five years.

Why it matters: The Benchmarks should be reviewed and updated to: ensure they reflect all communities in Washington; link to kindergarten through third grade learning standards; and ensure the resource is available and widely used around the state.

Our actions for 2011:

- Convene a workgroup representing various communities in Washington.
- Review current Benchmarks and agree upon process to review and update the document.
- Update and disseminate Benchmarks and supporting resources.

Funding:

- DEL and Thrive have secured private funding to fund facilitation of the workgroup, and writing, printing and disseminating products.

Build Statewide Infrastructure for Partnerships and Mobilization

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #34)

Partnership lead: DEL

Strategy: Build infrastructure to strengthen partnerships, build capacity, broaden reach, and focus local early learning mobilization efforts.

Why it matters: People and organizations in many communities around Washington have joined together to share early learning information and resources. Early learning coalitions around the state have been working for many years to raise awareness and increase investment in early learning in their local communities. More recently, DEL has funded “hubs” in regions around the state to provide structure for regionalized infant/toddler service delivery. There needs to be a coordinated effort at the state level to support the needs of diverse communities and encourage linkages to one another and to the state-level efforts.

Our actions for 2011:

- Hire staff at state level to facilitate this work with the Early Learning Advisory Council
- Initiative SAC governance planning process, ensuring that local communities are also involved in the process
- Continue Thrive work with local coalitions to promote regionalization and coordination between and among communities

Funding:

- Federal State Advisory Council grant (approximately \$1.7 million) secured by DEL
- Thrive grants/technical assistance to local coalitions

Expand P-20 Longitudinal Data System

(Early Learning Plan Strategy #36)

Partnership lead: DEL

Strategy: Continue development of a seamless P-20 (preschool through higher education) longitudinal data system that includes information about the formal early learning education services and programs that children receive before they enter the k-12 education system.

Our actions for 2011:

- Work with the Office of Financial Management Education Research and Data Center to develop Washington’s P-20 longitudinal data system in collaboration with OSPI and others.
- Develop a statewide strategy to connect data from the field with state government program data, to ensure Washington identifies the right questions and methods for measuring child outcomes.

Why it matters: Recording and compiling data on the results of early learning services and programs before children enter kindergarten will enable Washington to identify ways to improve instruction, and assess how specific early learning programs and approaches are doing in addressing the preparation gap and preparing children for success in kindergarten.

Funding:

- Three-year U.S. Department of Education grant (DEL will receive \$2.5 million).

Measuring our success

The Early Learning Joint Resolution Partnership commits to reporting our progress at the end of each year. The Department of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington will produce a report in December 2011 on the extent to which we accomplished our goals for the year.

That report—as well as updates on the various initiatives—will be posted at www.del.wa.gov/plan.

We welcome other entities that are making progress on Early Learning Plan strategies to share their accomplishments by e-mailing communications@del.wa.gov





www.del.wa.gov/plan